

Message Text

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O R 241230 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9157

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

NHQHQA/ CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL TANGIER

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

RUMJPQ/ AMCONSUL DANANG 6119

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 SAIGON 4906

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAM CEASEFIRE SITUATION REPORT- MARCH 24, 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO
CONFIDENTIAL

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THE EMBASSY AS OF 2000 MARCH 24.

SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

PART I: NO SUNDAY SITREPS; MONDAY SITREP REINSTATED.

PART II: ICCS: CANDELS CRITICIZE WITHDRAWALS FROM TRI TON, BEN CAT.

PART III: FPJMC: TRUCE FOR MEDIEVAC AT TONLE CHAM; DRV SEEKS TO LINK CIVILIAN DETAINEE PROBLEM, OTHER ISSUES TO RELEASE OF US POW'S- DEADLOCK; US ATTACKS PLACEMENT OF SAM AT KHE SANH.

PART IV: TPJMC TO BE INAUGURATED MARCH 29.

PART V: GVN/ NLF BILATERALS; RVN OFFERS RELEASE ANY POLITICAL PRISONERS NAMED AS COMMUNISTS BY NLF.

PART VI: GVN CHARGES 8,280 CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS.

PART VII: MR-1: ENEMY STRENGTHENS KHE SANH POSITION.

PART VIII: MR-2: INDOELS IN REGION III BEGIN ROTATION.

PART IX: MR-3: FIGHTING INTENSITIES ALONG PHUOC TUY, LONG KHANH BORDER; TONLE CHAM SITUATION CRITICAL, GVN MAY REACT; SHARP CLASH IN LONG AN.

PART X: MR-4: BATTLE FOR HONG NGU IS ON.

PART I: ADJUSTMENT IN SITREP SCHEDULE

THE EMBASSY WILL HENCEFORTH OMIT THE SUNDAY INSTEAD OF THE MONDAY DAILY SITREP. MONDAYS, THE EMBASSY WILL FILE BOTH A DAILY SITREP AND A WEEKLY ASSESSMENT.

PART II: INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CONTROL AND SUPERVISION (ICCS)

1. SIX HOUR MARCH 23 PLENARY INCLUDED A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE PRG REQUEST THAT SA HUYNH INCIDENT BE RE- INVESTIGATED. THREE DELEGATIONS VOTED TO CONDUCT RE- INVESTIGATION, BUT CANADA CONFIDENTIAL

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REFUSED WITHOUT AN INQUIRY TO REGION II (DANANG) REGARDING CIRCUMSTANCES OF PRG'S NON- PARTICIPATION IN EARLIER INVESTIGATION. THE OTHER THREE DELEGATIONS REFUSED TO REQUEST SUCH AN INQUIRY. LACKING UNANIMITY, NO INVESTIGATION WAS ORDERED.

2. PLENARY DISCUSSED PRECIPITATE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN WITHDRAWAL MARCH 23 FROM TRI TON (REGION VII) (MARCH 23 SITREP), CANADA AND INDONESIA CRITICIZED LACK OF ANY CONSULTATION PRECEDING THEIR COLLEAGUES' MOVE AND APPEALED

TO THEM TO RETURN.

3. PLENARY DISCUSSED THE MILITARY COMMITTEE'S INABILITY TO AGREE ON A LETTER TO THE FPJMC REGARDING INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT OF THE ICCS (TRI TON, HONG NGU, ETC.) AGAIN NO AGREEMENT WAS ARRIVED AT ON A TEXT. CANDEL, THEREFORE, DECIDED TO SEND ITS OWN LETTER.

4. PLENARY DISCUSSED THE POLISH WITHDRAWAL FROM THE BEN CAT THEAM (REGION V) WHICH IS BASED AT LAM SON (BINH DUONG PROVINCE). AGAIN THERE HAD BEEN NO CONSULTATION. (A POLISH TEAM MEMBER HAD STATED THAT SINCE ARVN ARTILLERY, POSITIONED NEAR THE ICCS COMPOUND, WAS DELIVERING STEADY STREAM OF FIRE (IN SUPPORT OF RACH BAP), THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT COUNTER FIRE FROM OTHER SIDE MIGHT CAUSE INJURY TO THEIR PERSONNEL. A HUNGDEL TEAM MEMBER HAD INDICATED THAT IT WAS CONSIDERING MAKING A SIMILAR WITHDRAWAL.) HUNGDEL AND POLDEL PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THE ACTIONS OF THEIR COMPATRIOTS AT LAM SON.

5. AN UNANIMOUS REPORT FROM REGION III (PLEIKU) REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION OF A PRG COMPLAINT OF GVN ATTACKS ON DUC CO WAS ALSO DISCUSSED. REPORT CONCLUDES THAT THE GVN DID INDEED CARRY OUT ATTACKS IN VIOLATION OF THE CEASEFIRE. HOWEVER, NO DECISION WAS TAKEN ON IT BY THE PLENARY BECAUSE CANDEL HAD RECEIVED IT ONLY AN HOUR BEFORE.

6. TWO INVESTIGATION REPORTS FROM REGION VII (CAN THO) WERE FORWARDED TO THE FPJMC, ONE ON THE GVN'S TAU XUAN COMPLAINT AND THE OTHER ON VINH CHAU. ONE WAS NON- CONTROVERSIAL AND THE OTHER NOTED THAT THE GVN HAD SUPPLIED SOME FALSE EVIDENCE-- PIECES OF MORTAR SHELLS HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN PLANTED.

7. HUNGARIAN CHAIRMAN (URANOVICZ) THEN READ (CANDEL
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BELIEVES BY ERROR) A LETTER DATED MARCH 22 FROM HUNGARIAN MEMBER OF BIEN HOS REGION V TEAM ASKING THAT ICCS SAIGON REQUEST PRG ELEMENT OF SAIGON FPJMC APPOINT A LIAISON OFFICER TO COME TO BIEN HOA TO ARRANGE WITH THE OTHER FPJMC PARTIES THE SAFETY OF THE ICCS INVESTIGATIONS OF THE RACH BAP AND TONLE CHAM COMPLAINTS. HUNGARIANS WERE CRITICIZED FOR DELAYING

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AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 SAIGON 4906

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO
THE EMBASSY AS OF 2000 MARCH 24.

ACTION ON THIS LETTER WHILE MEN WERE BEING KILLED AT RACH BAP
AND TONLE CHAM. CANADIAN AND HUNGARIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN
THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WERE DELEGATED TO CONTACT PRG IMMEDIATELY.

PART III: FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (FPJMC)

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1. A TRUCE WAS ARRANGED AM MARCH 24 AT THE BESIEGED ARVN
RANGER CAMP AT TONLE CHAM IN MR-3. ONLY INITIAL REPORTS ARE
AVAILABLE. HOWEVER IT APPEARS THAT AT LWAST FOUR ARVN
MEDEVAC HELICOPTERS LIFTED 26 INJURED RANGERS TO SAFETY;
A NUMBER OF OTHER LIGHTLY WOUNDED REPORTEDLY REFUSED
EVACUATION AND REMAINED TO FIGHT.

2. DURING A MARCH 23 CENTRAL FPJMC MEETING THE DRW REITERATED
ITS POSITION THAT WITHDRAWAL OF US/ FWMA FORCES IS LINED WITH
THE RETURN OF ONLY THOSE US AND OTHER FOREIGN POW' S CAPTURED
IN VIETNAM AND THAT THE STATUS OF THOSE CAPTURED IN LAOS

DOES NOT LIW WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THE DRV ASSERTED THAT THE US BECAUSE OF ITS "ABOUT FACE" ON THE MATTER OF COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES MUST BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DELAY IN THE RETURN OF POW'S.

3. THE US REJECTED THIS ALLEGATION REFERRING TO THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED IN PARIS THAT THE DRV WOULD ENSURE THE RELEASE OF POW'S HELD IN LAOS WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE SIGNATURE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THE PRG SUPPORTED THE DRV POSITION CHARGING THAT THE US IS LOOKING FOR A PRETEXT TO RETAIN US FORCES IN SVN AFTER THE 60 DAY PERIOD. THE PRG ARGUED THAT THE RETENTION BY US OF DAO PERSONNEL AND THE EMBASSY MARIAN GUARD DETACHMENT IS UNWARRANTED. AND FINALLY THE PRG ACCUSED THE US OF INTRODUCING ADDITIONAL MILITARY PERSONNEL INTO SVN DISGUISED AS CIVILIANS. THE PRG ALSO NOTED THAT IT WOULD CONSULT WITH ITS ALLIES IN CAMBODIA AND LAOS ABOUT THE RETURN OF US POW'S BUT OBSERVED THAT IN RESPONSE TO THIS US SHOULD LIVE UP TO ITS PLEDGE IN PARIS TO "INFLUENCE THE RVN TO RETURN CIVILIAN DETAINEES."

"US REJECTED THESE CHARGES, NOTING THAT PROVISIONS FOR DAO AND MARINE GUARDS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN PARIS.

4. THE FPJMC CHIEFS MET AGAIN MARCH 24. THE PRG HANDED THE US A LIST OF 32 US POWS' (INCLUDING FIVE CIVILIANS) AND ONE SOUTH KOREAN; HOWEVER PRG ATTACHED CONDITIONS WHICH WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE US (DETAILS FORWARDED BY USDEL FPJMC).

5. ON MARCH 23 THE US DELIVERED A STRONG PROTEST ABOUT THE NEW SAM MISSILE SITE AT KHE SANH. THE PRG CATEGORICALLY REJECTED THIS PROTEST, CLAIMING THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVEMENT OF REDEPLOYMENT OF PRG FORCES SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. THE PRG ACCUSED THE US OF THREATENING TO "REKINDLE" THE WAR.

PART IV. TWO PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (TPJMC)

THE US HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THE RVN OF SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN RECENT TWO PARTY TALKS CONCERNING FORMATION OF THE TPJMC. ON MARCH 15 IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT EACH PARTY'S DELEGATION TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CENTRAL TPJMC WOULD CONSIST OF 240 PERSONS. IT WAS ALSO AGREED TO INAUGURATE THE TPJMC WITH A CEREMONY MARCH 29; THAT THE HEAD OF EACH DELEGATION WILL HAVE THE RANK OF GENERAL OR EQUIVALENT; AND THAT THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF EACH PARTY'S DELEGATION TO THE TPJMC WILL BE BETWEEN 1,200 AND 1,500 PERSONS. THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE TPJMC TEAMS OUTSIDE SAIGON A CONTENTIOUS POINT, REMAINS TO BE RESOLVED.

PART V : GVN/PRG BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

ACCORDING TO WIRE SERVICE (AFP) STORY AS REPRINTED IN OFFICIAL VIETNAM PRESS GVN SPOKESMAN IN PARIS TOLD PRESS FOLLOWING MARCH 22 BILATERAL MEETING THAT GVN CHIEF NEGOTIATOR NGUYEN LUU VIEN HAD TOLD PRG THAT GVN WOULD RELEASE ANY CIVILIAN PRISONERS NAMED AND CLAIMED TO BE COMMUNISTS BY THE PRG. IN EXCHANGE GVN REQUESTED THE RELEASE OF 60,000 SOUTH VIETNAMESE CAPTURED AND HELD BY THE PRG.

PART VI:

GVN CHARGES 8,280 CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS

1. AS OF 12 NOON MARCH 23 THE GVN HAS CHARGED THE COMMUNISTS WITH A TOTAL OF 8,280 CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS. SINCE JAN 28 THE GVN CLAIMS TO HAVE KILLED 14,705 COMMUNIST SOLDIERS AND TO HAVE CAPTURED 209. FRIENDLY LOSSES ARE ADMITTED TO HAVE BEEN 2,965 KILLED, 14,503 WOUNDED, AND 792 MISSING. ALSO SINCE THE CEASEFIRE, 404 CIVILIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED 1,226 WOUNDED AND 951 ABDUCTED BY THE COMMUNISTS.

PART VII: MR-1

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN I CORPS REMAINED AT A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL WITH 26 INCIDENTS REPORTED INCLUDING 19 ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF) AND 5 GROUND ATTACKS. ARVN INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THE VICINITY OF THE KHE SANH AIRFIELD. THE RUNWAY HAS BEEN REPAIRED; SUPPLY ACTIVITY CONTINUES AND AAA IS EMPLACED. THE AIRBORNE AO SAW VERY LIGHT ACTIVITY. 1ST DIVISION CONTINUES TO RECEIVE PRESSURE, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIREBASE VEGHEL AREA. FIREBASE WEST IN QUANG NAM RECEIVED 9 ABFS AND ONE GROUND ATTACK FROM ELEMENTS OF NVA 711 DIVISION. IN QUANG NGAI, THE NVA 2ND DIVISION HAS REPORTEDLY ORDERED ITS SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS TO EMPLOY SMALL UNITS TO HARASS FRIENDLY FORCES WHILE LARGER UNITS MOVE WEST TO REFIT AND PREPARE FOR SA JUYNH AND PROVINCE WIDE OFFENSIVES. CORPS WIDE FRIENDLY CASUALTIES WERE 14 KIA, 4 MIA; ENEMY 30 KIA, 3 CAPTURED.
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FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRED 2,456 ROUNDS. THERE WERE NO NAVAL SUPPORT MISSIONS OR TACTICAL AIR SORTIES REPORTED.
2. ACCORDING TO POLOFF IN QUANG NAM, QUANG NAM SECTOR HEADQUARTERS REPORTS INDICATE THAT COMMUNISTS WITHIN PROVINCE ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN POLITICAL TRAINING AND PROPAGANDA. POLITICAL TRAINING CLASSES ARE BEING HELD FOR CADRE AT ALL LEVELS TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE ELECTIONS.
3. AN AMERICAN MILITARY OFFICER IN HUE REPORTED TO HUE POLOFF THAT A VNAF AIRCRAFT CROSSED THE TACH HAN RIVER ON MARCH 23 AND FLEW INTO "PRG AIRSPACE" EVIDENTLY DUE TO PILOT ERROR.

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AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

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AIRCRAFT WAS FIRED UPON FROM THE GROUND BUT WAS NOT HIT BEFORE IT QUICKLY RETURNED TO THE SOUTH. THE INCIDENT WAS VIEWED FROM THE PRISONER RELEASE POINT AND AN AP REPORTED QUOTED A CANADIAN ICCS OBSERVER AS SAYING: " THIS WILL BE REPORTED. THAT PILOT SHOULD BE FIRED COURT MARTIALLED."

4. MAJOR BURNS CANADIAN ICCS HOA AN, HAS TOLD THE QUANG NAM
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POLOFF THAT A MEMBER OF THE HUNGARIAN CONTINGENT KNOWN AS 2 ND LIEUTENANT JANOS KAPLAR IS BELIEVED TO BE IN ACTUALITY A RUSSIAN, AND A GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LENIGRAD.

5. SINCE MARCH 10, GVN AUTHORITIES HAVE MOVED APPROXIMATELY 4,400 REFUGEES BACK TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES IN CENTRAL QUE SON DISTRICT QUANG NAM. POLOFF REPORTS THAT THIS MOVE IS NOT VOLUNTARY AND THAT MANY OF THE RETURNEES WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO WAIT UNTIL THE MILITARY SITUATION IN QUE SON HAD BECOME MORE FAVORABLE. IN QUANG TRI ON THE OTHER HAND THE HAI LANG DISTRICT CHIEF INFORMED CONGEN WAR VICTIMS OFFICER ON MARCH 22 THAT IN ADDITION TO 5,800 REFUGEES OFFICIALLY TRANSPORTED TO HAI LANG BY THE GVN AN ADDITIONAL 3,000 RERUGEES HAVE RETURNED OF THEIR OWN TO RESETTLE IN IN SECURE AREAS OF QUANG TRI.

PART VIII MR 2

1. ENEMY ACTION WAS GENERALLY LIGHT AND SCATTERED. ONLY SHARP FIGHTING OCCURRED IN NORTHERN BINH DINH WHERE VC ABF FOLLOWED BY GROUND ATTACK ON ARVN POSITION IN HOAI NHON DISTRICT RESULTED IN TWO FRIENDLY KIA AND TWO WIA. ENEMY LOSSES REPORTEDLY 11 KIA. PLEIKU PC TOLD ARRO REP MAR 20 THAT RANGERS IN THAN AN AREA HAVE ORDERS TO CLEAR QL-19 AND TERRITORY TO NORTH OF HIGHWAY WESTWARD ALMOST TO NORTH SOUTH ROAD THAT REACHES PLEI DJRENG. ARRO REP COMMENTS THAT THIS MISSION IS OVERLY AMBITIOUS IN VIEW OF RANGERS PAST PERFORMANCE, BUT EVEN SO GVN SEEMS TO BE CONCEDED THAT MORE DISTANT OBJECTIVES SUCH AS DUC CO FORMER LE THANH DISTRICT HQ AND PLEI DJRENG ROAD ITSELF ARE IRRETRIEVABLE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
 2. JUST RESUMED RAILROAD OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO DRAW ENEMY ATTENTION; SOUTHBOUND TRAIN OUT OF NHA TRANG ENCOUNTERED TWO PILES OF BOULDER ON TRACK JUST SOUTHWEST OF VINH XUONG DISTRICT HQ IN KHANH HOA MORNING OF MR 23. SIGN AFFIXED TO ONE ROCKPILE SAID " MOVEMENT FORBIDDEN." HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO ENEMY HARASSMENT AND TRAIN WAS ABLE TO PROCEED ONCE BOULDERS CLEARED FROM TRACK.
 3. DRV REGIONAL JMC DELEGATION IN PLEIKU PAID FAREWELL COURTESY CALLS ON EACH OF THE FOUR REGIONAL ICCS TEAMS MAR 23 AND HAS INVITED ALL FOUR TEAMS TO ITS COMPOUND FOR RETURN CALL THIS AFTERNOON.
 4. INDODELS IN TRUCE REGION III (PLEIKU) WILL REPORTEDLY BEGIN ROTATING WITHIN REGION MAR 28 IN IMITATION OF CANADIANS BUT IT IS STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER POLES AND HUNGARIANS WILL JOIN
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- IN THIS GAME OF MUSICAL CHAIRS. MEANWHILE REPORT FROM BAO LOC INDICATES THAT CANDEL THERE (TRUCE REGION IV) WILL COMMENCE ROTATION SOON, BUT INTERVAL NOT YET KNOWN.
5. BAN ME THUOT SUB REGIONAL TEAM REMAINS INACTIVE AND BORED AND SOMETIMES BOGGED DOWN IN ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS; TEAM UNLIKELY TO BEGIN INVESTIGATING ANY TIME SOON. APART FROM INADEQUATELY PREPARED GVN PROTESTS CITED PREVIOUSLY (SAIGON 4853 MAR 23 SITREP), TEAM NOW FACED WITH APPARENTLY OVERLAPPING SUPPORT CONTACTS AND AT MOMENT HAS TWO SETS OF DRIVERS TO CONTENT WITH. POLOFF NOTES THAT EVEN QUALITY OF PLAY IN DAILY VOLLEYBALL GAMES HAS GALLEN OFF SERIOUSLY AND THAT TEAM'S MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS WEEK WAS PLACING WEEKLY ORDER FOR SOFT DRINKS AND BEER.
 6. DARLAC PLANS TO HOLD COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN 43 OF ITS 48 VILLAGES FROM MAY 20 THROUGH JULY 1 WITH LARGEST NUMBER ON MAY 20. DEMOCRACY PARTY HAS NEW AND HIGHLY VISIBLE HQ BUILDING ON MAIN STREET OF BAN ME THUOT BUT OFFICE YET TO BE OCCUPIED OR FORMALLY OPENED.

PART IX MR -3.

1. FIGHTING HAS INTENSIFIED ALONG ROUTE 2 AT THE PHUOC TUY-

LONG KHANH BORDER WHERE AN ESTIMATED 2 COMMUNIST BATTALIONS HAVE CUT THE HIGHWAY. III CORPS CG LTG MINH HAS SENT HIS TROUBLESHOOTER BN AN TO THE SCENE TO DIRECT OPERATIONS WHICH IN THE LEAST 2 DAYS HAVE INCLUDED 22 VNAF AIRSTRIKES. THE RVN HAS FILED A COMPLAINT WITH THE FPJMC AND THE ICCS TEAM IN XUAN LOC, BUT THE LATTER GROUP IS (#)

MARCH 26.

2. IT APPEARS THAT WHOEVER HAS THE CHAIR THE CANDEL RETAINS DEFACTO RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATIONS, LOGISTICS AND MOST OTHER MATTERS FOR EACH REGION V (BINE HOA) CONTROL TEAM. WHEN POLISH COL MORAWSKI TOOK THE CHAIR OF THE REGION V HQ TEAM MARCH 19 HE THANKED HIS INDONESIAN PREDECESSOR FOR HIS SERVICE THEN ASKED CANDEL FOR A REPORT ON WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED DURING THE PRECEDING WEEK

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3. OTHER SIGNIFICANT HOSTILE ACTIVITY CONTINUED DURING THE LAST 24 HOURS. A TOTAL OF 24 INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED BY ARVN III CORPS 5 GROUND CONTACTS AND 19 ATTACKS BY FIRE. TONLE CHAM BASE CAMP (TAY NINH) WAS STILL THE FOCAL POINT OF MILITARY ACTION. THE CAMP' S SITUATION IS NOW HIGHLY CRITICAL AND IT IS IN IMMINENT DANGER OF FALLING. YESTERDAY THE CAMP RECEIVED NEARLY 400 ROUNDS OF MIXED MORTAR IN FIVE SEPARATE ABFS AND ONE GROUND PROBE IN WHICH B-40 AND M-79 GRENADA ROUNDS AND HEAVY SMALL ARMS DIRECT FIRE WERE EMPLOYED. THE SUPPLY SITUATION IS CRITICAL AND THE NUMBER OF EFFECTIVE TROOPS IS DOWN TO ABOUT 200 RANGERS. A RELIEF OPERATION WOULD HAVE TO CONSIST OF AT LEAST A REGIMENT. PROBABLY TWO REGIMENTS AND COULD ONLY BE LAUNCHED FROM AN LOC. THIS WOULD ENTAIL MAJOR

NOTE BY OC/ T: SAIGON 4906 (SEC 3 OF 4) (#) OMISSION IN PART IX, PARA 1. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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USDEL JEC PARIS
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL TANGIER
COMUSMACV
CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO

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GROUND FIGHTING AND WOULD PLACE THE CEASEFIRE IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY
IN MR III.

4. THERE ARE HOWEVER REPORTS THAT LTG MINH MAY BE CONTEMPLATING
JUST AN OPERATION AND THAT THE HAS NO INTENTION OF LETTING
TONLE CHAM BE OVERRUN. THE REPORTED ARRIVAL IN MR III OF VC/ NVA
UNITS FROM MR IV AND CAMBODIA, IF TRUE, COULD PRESAGE NEW
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MAJOR BATTLES FROM TAY NINH TO AN LOC AND DOWN THE SAIGON RIVER
CORRIDOR. (SEE PART III FOR INITIAL ACCOUNTS OF MARCH 24
TRUCE WHICH ALLOWED 26 WOUNDED TO BE AIRLIFTED FROM TONLE CHAM.)

5. ELSEWHERE IN MR III THERE WAS A SHARP GROUND ENGAGEMENT IN THE
VICINITY OF THU THUA CITY (LONG AN) WHERE THE 37 TH RF GROUP
WAS ATTACKED BY AN UNKNOWN SIZE HOSTILE FORCE. THERE WERE
3 FRIENDLY WOUNDED AND 10 VC/ NVA KILLED.

PART IX: MR-4

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS AT A HIGH LEVEL YESTERDAY WITH 63
VC/ NVA INITIATED INCIDENTS REPORTED. GROUND ATTACKS INCREASED
TO 10, WHILE ATTACKS BY FIRE AND HARASSMENTS REMAINED AT RELATIVELY
HIGH LEVELS OF THE PAST WEEK. MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS
CONCENTRATED PRIMARILY IN THE HONG NGU AND CAI CAI AREAS.
SHELLING OF THE TRI TON AREA DECLINED. ACTIVITY WAS LIGHT IN THE
HA TIEN AREA. CHUONG THIEN AND DINH TUONG WERE UNUSUALLY QUIET.

2. THE FIGHT IS ON FOR HONG NGU WHERE MILITARY ACTIVITY IS AGAIN CONCENTRATED AROUND VINH LOC B HAMLET. THE HAMLET WAS LOST TO THE VC/ NVA IN THE CEASEFIRE OFFENSIVE AND WAS THE LAST TO BE RETAKEN. TWO, PERHAPS THREE NVA REGIMENTS ARE ENGAGED. ARVN HAS DEPLOYED AN ADDITIONAL BATTALLION FROM THE 9 TH DIVISION AND AN ARMORED CAVALRY TROOP TO THE BATTLE. RVNAF FORCES IN THE AREA PREVIOUSLY TOTTLED ABOUT TWO REGIMENTS. AIR STRIKES HAVE INCREASED SHARPLY.

3. THE CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS WILL PROBABLY PULL OUT OF HONG NGU, ACCORDING TO ICCS REGION VI (CAN THO) SOURCES. THE NVA ROCKETED THE TOWN AGAIN MARCH 23. ONE 122 MM ROUND IMPACTED 300 METERS FROM THE ICCS QUARTERS. THERE IS NO JMC AND CONSEQUENTLY NO US IN HONG NGU, AND THE ICCS PERSONNEL THERE ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL PRETTY LONELY IN THE FACE OF THE STEPPED UP NVA/ VC ACTIVITY IN THE AREA. THE TRI TON ICCS TEAM, MINUS THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS WHO BUGGED OUT MARCH 23, ARE INVESTIGATING THE NVA ROCKETING OF TAN CHAU (SEE PARA 6 BELOW). THE US/ GVN QUAN LONG JMC HAS ASKED QUAN LONG ICCS TO CONTACT THE PRG AND ASK THEM TO CALL OFF THE ATTACK ON THE OUTPOST IN GIA RAY, BAC LIEU PROVINCE, SEE PARA 5 BELOW.

4. EARLIER REPORTS OF VC/ NVA INTRODUCTION OF ROCKETS INTO KIEN
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HOA WERE CONFIRMED MARCH 22 WHEN GVN FORCES CAPTURED 15 120 MM ROCKETS BEING TRANSPORTED BY SAMPAN. THE SAME DAY A VC ATTEMPT TO LAUNCH TWO 107 MM ROCKETS AGAINST BEN TRE WAS THWARTED BY THE ACTION OF A GVN SECURITY PATROL. ONE ROCKET MISFIRED AND ONE WAS CAPTURED ALONG WITH TWO MAKESHIFT LAUNCHERS. THE 12 MM ROCKETS WERE CAPTURED ON THE NORTHERN TRUC GIANG SUPPLY ROUTE , LEADING KIEN HOA OFFICIALS TO BELIEVE THEY WERE DESTINED TO BE USED AGAINST MY THO OR DONG TAM RATHER THAN BEN TRE.

5. THE VC/ NVA ARE PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE RANGER OUTPOST NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE BO DE RIVER IN AN XUYEN. GUNSHIPS WERE CALLED IN THE NIGHT OF MARCH 22 TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE. THE VC LAUNCHED A DAYLIGHT ATTACK ON AN OUTPOST IN SOUTHERN GIA RAY DISTRICT TOF BAC LIEU MARCH 24, KILLING 4 AND WOUNDING 10 RF DEFENDERS. THIS DAYLIGHT ATTACK FOLLOWS A RECENT VC PATTERN OF INCREASING PRESSURE IN THE AREA BORDERING OF AN XUYEN PROVINCE.

6. POST- CEASEFIRE GENERATED REFUGEES IN CHAU DUC NOW NUMBER OVER 25,000 INCLUDING 8,000 CAMBODIANS WHO HAVE COME ACROSS THE BORDER SINCE TET, 3,000 IN THE PAST WEEK. CHAU DOC OFFICIALS HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO CARE FOR THE REFUGEES AND BELIEVE THEY CAN HANDLE UP TO 1-2,000 NEW REFUGEES A WEEK. NO CAMBODIAN REFUGEES HAVE BEEN SENT BACK TO PHNOM PENH AS PLANNED LAST WEEK. VC / NVA ROCKET ATTACKS ON TAN CHAU MARCH 22

AND 23 KILLED 43 CAMBODIAN REFUGEES AND WOUNDED 105 MORE. THE VC/ NVA DO NOT APPEAR TO BE TARGETING REFUGEE CAMPS, BUT ARE TRYING TO HIT 9 TH DIV. ARTILLERY POSITIONS.

7. LARGE SHIPS ARE STILL MOVING UP THE MEKONG FROM TAN CHAU CITY IN CHAU DOC TO PHNOM PENH, BUT ONLY IN CONVOYS WITH NAVAL ESCORT. SOME SHIPS HAVE BEEN ANCHORED NEAR TAN CHAU FOR FIVE DAYS WAITING TO JOIN A CONVOY BECAUSE THEIR CAPTAINS ARE WORRIED ABOUT ARTILLERY FIRE ACROSS THE RIVER. EVEN CONVOYED SHIPS ARE SUBJECT TO HARASSMENT BY ROCKETS AND MORTAR FIRE.
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